

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 NIC-01

ACDA-05 SAJ-01 (ISO) W

----- 075039

R 141522Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4162

INFO AMEMBUSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STOCKHOLM 1229

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, SW

SUBJECT: SWEDISH LEFT COMMUNIST PARTY ELECTS NEW CHAIRMAN

REF: STOCKHOLM 4940

1. LARS WERNER WAS ELECTED NEW PARTY CHAIRMAN OF SWEDISH LEFT COMMUNIST PARTY (VPK) AT THE PARTY'S 24TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE MARCH 13. WERNER RECEIVED 162 VOTES TO 74 FOR HIS CPEF OPPONENT, ROLF HAGEL OF GOTHENBURG, CANDIDATE OF REPUDIALLY "STALINIST" FACTION. WERNER WAS FORMERLY PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN UNDER CARL-HENRIK HERMANSSON, WHO STEPPED DOWN AT CONGRESS AFTER ALMOST 11 YEARS IN OFFICE.

2. CONVENTION WAS MARKED BY CONTINUED INFIGHTING BETWEEN STALINIST, OLD-LINE, WORKER-ORIENTED DELEGATES GENEJLLY CENTERED IN NORBOTEN (NORTHERN SWEDEN AREA), AND "REFORMIST" YOUTH AND INTELLECTUALLY-ORIENTED FACTION, WHICH IS CENTERED IN STOCKHOLM. CONTINUED CONTROL BY LATTER SEEMS ASSURED WITH ELECTION OF WERNER AND REMOVAL

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FROM OFFICE OF 8 MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVSCOMMITTEE WHO WERE

IDENTIFIED WITH NORBOTTEN FACTION. HOWEVER, VICTORY MAY BE A COSTLY ONE, SINCE INFIGHTING AT THE CONGRESS HAS DEMONSTRATED DEEP DIVISIONS WITHIN PARTY. SHOULD THE NORBOTTEN FACTION LEAVE THE PARTY OR REFUSE TO SUPPORT WERNER'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND CANDIDATES, THE PARTY WOULD LOSE AREA WHERE IT RECEIVED ITS HIGHEST CONCENTRATION (13PERCENT) OF TOTAL VOTES IN LAST ELECTION. HOWEVER, SINCE THIS WOULD PLACE PARTY IN DANGER OF FALLING BELOW 4 PERCENT OF TOTAL VOTE REQUIRED TO KEEP REPRESENTATION IN RIKS DAG, PARTY LEADERSHIP WILL UNDOUBTEDLY EXERT EVERY EFFORT TO AVOID FORMAL SPLIT.

3. WERNER'S BACKGROUND AND SUPPORT BASE IN SOUTHERN SWEDEN SEEM TO PRESAGE A DIFFICULT TRANSITION TIME, ESPECIALLY AS REGARDS NORBOTTEN FACTION. HE WAS BORN IN 1935 IN FREDHALL, SWEDEN, A TRADITIONALLY "RED" AREA. RAISED BY HIS FATHER TO BE A COMMUNIST, HE JOINED THE PARTY AT THE AGE OF 17. HE RECEIVED CERTIFICATES AS A BRICKLAYER AND CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, AND WAS ACTIVE FROM THE AGE OF 20 IN THE BUILDING WORKERS UNION. WERNER WAS ONE OF THE FIRST YOUNG SWEDISH COMMUNISTS TO CALL FOR "DESTALINIZATION," AND ACTIVELY SUPPORTED HERMANSSON'S BID FOR POWER IN 1964 AGAINST HILDING HAGBERG OF NORBOTTEN. HE WAS ELECTED PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN IN 1967. IN FIRST SPEECH AS VAIRMAN, WERNER STRESSED THEME FREQUENTLY EXPOUNDED BY HERMANSSON THAT PARTY LINE MUST BE FOLLOWED AND PARTY UNITY ACHIEVED.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTY LEADERS, PARTY ELECTIONS, MEETING VOTING RECORDS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 MAR 1975
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STOCKH01229
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750091-0870
From: STOCKHOLM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750348/aaaabqxf.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STOCKHOLM 4940
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <12 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SWEDISH LEFT COMMUNIST PARTY ELECTS NEW CHAIRMAN
TAGS: PINT, SW, VPK, (WERNER, LARS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006